REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 11, 21-25, and 29-32 are currently pending. Claims 1, 5, 6, 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 24, 25, and 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,310,692 to Fan et al. (hereinafter "the '692 patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,952,726 to White et al. (hereinafter "the '726 patent"); and Claims 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '692 and '726 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,430,711 to Sekizawa (hereinafter "the '711 patent").

Amended Claim 1 is directed to:

> A method of monitoring a plurality of image printing devices communicatively coupled to a network, comprising:
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> periodically obtaining, from an image printing device of the plurality of image printing devices by a service machine using a first Internet protocol via a firewall over the network, first device information of the image printing device, the first device information including a globally unique identifier and at least one of a semi-static state and a dynamic state of the image printing device;
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> storing, by the service machine, the obtained first device information into an information storage;
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> processing, by the service machine, stored information of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the service machine to generate second device information that includes a statistical summary of status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices; and
>
> transmitting, at regular periodic intervals or upon request, the second device information using a second Internet protocol from the service machine to a second computer that is

> connected to the network of the plurality of image printing devices,
>
> wherein the service machine is remote from the plurality of image printing devices, and the service machine is the first computer to obtain the first device information from the plurality of image printing devices.

The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.[1]

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office Action asserts that the '692 patent discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of the status information being obtained from sensors of the device, that the device information includes a device identification of the image processing device, and the step of processing stored information of a plurality of image processing devices, and relies on inherency arguments and the '726 patent to remedy those deficiencies.

The '692 patent is directed to a printer resource management system that includes a database that stores, for a printer, at least one pair of attributes that are representative of a printer resource level and a printer resource threshold for preventive monitoring of the printer resource. Further, the '692 patent discloses that the printer resource manager receives the updated printer resource level from the printer (e.g., via SNMP), updates the level in the database, compares the resource level with the corresponding resource threshold to determine whether the corresponding printer resource level is deficient, and generates and outputs an advance notification if the printer resource level is determined to be deficient. In particular, as shown in Figure 3, the '692 patent discloses a printer 250, a server 240 having the printer resource manager 248, and a client 220. Further, as shown in the flowchart in Figure 4, the notification of the low printer resource level is dependent upon the comparison of the resource level with the threshold.

[1] See, e.g., Figure 11 and the discussion related thereto in the specification. See also paragraphs [0055] and [0059] in the published application.

However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the '692 patent fails to disclose processing, by the service machine, stored information of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the service machine to generate second device information that includes status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '692 patent fails to disclose periodically obtaining, from an image printing device of the plurality of image printing devices by a service machine using a first Internet protocol via a firewall over the network, first device information of the image printing device, the first device information including a globally unique identifier and at least one of a semi-static state and a dynamic state of the image printing device, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the '692 patent merely discloses obtaining a printer resource level from a printer using SNMP. The '692 patent is silent regarding obtaining the first device information via a firewall and that the first device information includes a globally unique identifier. In this regard, Applicant notes that the globally unique identifier is required because the service machine is remote from the image printing device and the first device information is obtained over the network via a firewall.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '692 patent fails to disclose transmitting, at regular periodic intervals or upon request, the second device information using a second Internet protocol from the service machine to a second computer, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the '692 patent merely discloses that the server 140 outputs a notification of a low printer resource level only when the level is below a threshold.

The '726 patent is directed to a method and system for monitoring resource usage in a networked computer system that includes client systems, a resource server, and a collection server. In particular, the '726 patent discloses that a resource agent in the resource server forwards job attribute information and job result information to a collection server 18.

Further, the '726 patent discloses that the collection server 18 generates job detail information representing system resources used in executing the resource job from the job attribute information and the job result information, and stores the job details in a database. Further, the '726 patent discloses that the job details in the database can be provided to a user of a resource management system for use in monitoring usage of system resources. In particular, the '726 patent discloses that the "job results" 30 or 40 will include a message indicating whether the job was completed or failed to print, and could include such information as the job identifier and the times of receipt and completion of the job.[2] Thus, the '726 patent discloses a system in which information related to a particular job is obtained by a resource server and then sent to a collection server.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that the '726 patent fails to disclose that a service machine that is remote from the plurality of image printing devices and is the first computer to obtain the first device information from the plurality of image printing devices, processes stored information of a plurality of image printing devices to generate second device information that includes a statistical summary of status information of each of the plurality of image printing devices, and then transmits the second device information to a second computer that is connected to the network of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the '726 patent discloses that the resource server 14 collects and forwards to the collection server 18 resource usage information pertaining to the resources associated with the resource server 14, as print jobs are performed.[3] Thus, the '726 patent discloses that the information regarding jobs completed by the printer are sent from the resource server 14 to the collection server 18, indicating that the collection server cannot correspond to the claimed service machine since, for example, it is not the first computer to

[2] See '726 patent, column 4, lines 58-64.
[3] See '726 patent, column 7, lines 22-36. See also column 8, lines 45-47.

obtain the first device information from the plurality of image printing devices, as required by Claim 1.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '726 patent fails to disclose processing, by the service machine, stored information of the plurality of image printing devices monitored by the service machine to generate second device information that includes **a statistical summary of status information** of each of the plurality of image printing devices, as recited in amended Claim 1. Applicant respectfully submits that the '726 patent is silent regarding the statistical summary limitation recited in amended Claim 1.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that the '726 patent fails to disclose periodically obtaining, from an image printing device of the plurality of image printing devices by a service machine using a first Internet protocol via a firewall over the network, first device information of the image printing device, the first device information including a globally unique identifier and at least one of a semi-static state and a dynamic state of the image printing device, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '692 and '726 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the periodically obtaining and the processing steps recited in amended Claim 1, which must be performed by a service machine that obtains device information from a plurality of image printing devices via a firewall, processes the service information on the plurality of image printing devices to generate second device information that includes a statistical summary of status information, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Independent Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 have been amended

in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 2 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicant respectfully submits that the '711 patent fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '692 and '726 patents, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of dependent Claims 2 and 5 are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1 and 21.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, 21, 25, 29, and 30 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the cited references.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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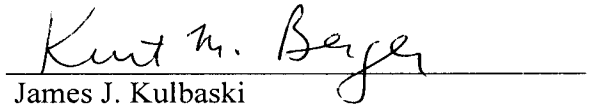

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